

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
PUBLIC HEARING
ON THE
JOHN J. FOLEY SKILLED NURSING FACILITY

A Public Hearing on the John J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility was held at the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, in the Rose Y. Caracappa Auditorium, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on November 25, 2008, at 10:00 a.m.

LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay
Deputy Presiding Officer Vivian Vilorio-Fisher
Legislator Edward P. Romaine
Legislator Kate Browning
Legislator Brian Beedenbender
Legislator Daniel Losquadro
Legislator Ricardo Montano
Legislator Thomas Barraga
Legislator DuWayne Gregory
Legislator Steven Stern

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Tim Laube - Clerk of the Legislature
Terry Pearsall - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Michael Pitcher - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Paul Perillie - Aide to the Majority Leader
Linda Bay - Aide to the Minority Leader
Bob Martinez - Aide to Legislator Montano
Kaitlin Boyd - Aide to Legislator Beedenbender
Cheryl Felice - President/AME
Kathy Malloy - Secretary/AME
Debra Alloncius - Legislative Director/AME
Carol DeMangin
Peter Quinn
Christopher Ogno
Linda Ogno
Christopher DeStio
Dot Kerrigan
Kathleen Reeves
Christine Harvey
All Other Interested

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Lucia Braaten, Court Stenographer

[THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 4:04 P.M.]

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. Could everybody rise, please, for a Pledge, led by Legislator Losquadro?

(*Salutation*)

Thank you. You can be seated. Madam Clerk, has this Public Hearing been properly advertised?

MS. LOMORIELLO:

Yes.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. I should note for the record that there has been some discussion whether these hearings are necessary or not, but I guess better to err on excessive hearings than not enough hearings.

We have about eight cards. The time limit will be five minutes. It's a public hearing. And the first speaker --

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Skip the first, go to the second.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Thank you.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Cheryl Felice was the first speaker and she's not in the room, so we'll skip over here. Kathy Malloy. Come on forward, Kathy. Do you want to sit or stand? Whatever you want to do.

MS. LORMORIELLO:

You could sit right here, if you'd like.

MS. MALLOY:

Okay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Wherever you're more comfortable.

MS. MALLOY:

Just let me apologize, I'm full of Novocain. I've had surgery, but I think you can still understand me.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. Don't drool, that's all.

MS. MALLOY:

I won't drool, I promise that. I can't smile either. Good evening to the Legislature, Presiding Officer. I just had a few questions in this Public Hearing.

I was wondering if the Legislature would be able to provide me with a -- oh, first, my name is Kathleen Malloy, representing AME. If you can provide me with a copy of the specific written plan or proposal that has been submitted to the County Legislature or to the County Executive to provide the services of the John J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility through entities other than Suffolk County

Government and/or County Department of Health Services using employees other than Suffolk County employees. And to also, please, provide me with a copy of all written documentation, including the New York State approvals and Budget Review Office certifications, as required by Section 9.6 of the Suffolk County Administrative Code. Would I be able to get a copy of that, because Mr. Levy couldn't give it to me the other night.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Well I don't think -- see, that goes to the heart of the issue, what I talked about before. I don't think we have any of those documents, because I don't think there is any plan as yet to sell the facility. You know, that's -- you know, we were of the opinion that these hearings would take place at the end of the RFP process when we had a willing buyer and a proposal on how they were going to purchase it, for how much, and how it was going to be operated. But we have a bit of a disagreement in that the Executive Branch felt that the hearings had to be held before the RFP could be issued, and that's why we're here. So the documents that you're looking for I don't have, because I haven't seen them and I don't think they exist, unless the -- unless Counsel can -- did you get the documents?

MR. NOLAN:

I did not get the documents. But just to follow up on the point the Presiding Officer was making was it was our -- my opinion that the Public Hearings called for in A-9(6) should occur later, after the RFP was issued and there was a specific plan or proposal. As the Presiding Officer said, the County Attorney's Office and the County Executive took the position that before they issued the RFP there had to be a set of hearings. But there was testimony from the County Attorney at our meetings that when they do have a specific plan or approval, after there is an RFP, there will be another round of hearings, so we're going to have basically two sets of hearings, one now, one later.

MS. MALLOY:

If I may go on the record, sir. When I attended the County Executive's -- I assume it was by him, but I was speaking to Mr. Ben Zwirn, it wasn't the County Executive. When I attended the initial hearing on the 19th, I had asked the same question, and Mr. Zwirn said, "Oh, you already got that, it's the HMM report." And I asked, "Was that the same HMM report that was distributed to the County Legislature on June 5th?" And he said, "Yes, it was." I asked Mr. Zwirn to identify the pages on which the State approvals were contained, and I'm sure you knew he could not, or which page the Budget Review certification, could not, or which page listed the entity that would be providing the services under the plan, and he could not. I asked him about the pages with the evaluation of the specific costs of the private entity, or the page with the evaluation and analysis of the quality of services to be provided by the specific private party, pages identifying the precise level of services to be provided by the private entity, along with the pages with the comparison of the level of services between the plan and the level of services provided by the County, and Mr. Zwirn said, no, he could not do that. And I did ask him if I could be provided with a list of the names of the vendors who have been meeting with the County Executive to provide the assurances he has publicly stated with respect to how the vendors will deal with the patients and the employees, and were these vendors selected via a Request for Proposal, the RFP. I didn't get an answer to that either. So, I guessed, if they were not, will they then be precluded from bidding on any future RFPs if legally permissible RFPs regarding the John J. Foley are ever issued. I didn't get anything when I was here on the 19th.

So what I will ask tonight is the same thing I asked on the 19th. This was the same documentation that I requested previously. I was denied. I said, since I can -- this -- what I'm asking for cannot be shown in the HMM report, which is what Mr. Zwirn said the HMM report was taking the place of. I did hereby request that the public hearings be recessed until such time as the Suffolk County Local Law 9.6, also known as the Mary Hibberd Law, has been complied with, because he can only hold a hearing on an actual State-approved, Budget Review Office certified specific plan from some non-County entity, and I'd like to go on the record stating that again, sir.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you.

MS. MALLOY:

Thank you.

(Applause)

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. Cheryl. I saw Cheryl joined us.

MS. FELICE:

Debbie's actually going to make the statement for us, please.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay.

MS. FELICE:

Thank you.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Good afternoon, Members of the Legislature. I have a big mouth, but not that big. Good afternoon, Members of the Legislature. We're here on behalf of the proposition or the RFP on J.J. Foley. I'd like to read a statement to you on behalf of Cheryl Felice and the members of the Association of Municipal Employees.

We have come to a critical juncture in our quest to keep the J.J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility County-owned and County-operated. We have been given numerous figures on the cost to operate it, cost to close it, cost to keep it operating for the next year, and most figures change like the weather here on Long Island. The Legislature has kept an even keel while being attacked regularly, all because you believe that government is charged with the duty to protect and provide for the health and safety of those who cannot provide for themselves. For this, the Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees is extremely grateful, but we all know that the intent to get rid of the Nursing Home was the number one priority of Steve Levy and we cannot falter now.

AME has filed an Article 78 on behalf of the Nursing Home residents, Suffolk County residents, the Legislature, and our membership, because we share the same belief that the J.J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility must remain open. We firmly believe that Steve Levy is acting illegally and has no regard for abiding by the laws of Suffolk County. That is self-evident in this action and others that he has undertaken in which AME was also successful. At no point have you been given any of the necessary documentation required under Local Law 9-6, also known as the Mary Hibberd, and by following the letter of the law should not proceed one step further with these illegally-held hearings. The resolution of this problem lies in your hands. We ask that these hearings be recessed until all documentation required under Local Law 9-6 be produced. Until then, the John J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility should be maintained and upgraded as we together turn the facility into the asset that it should be for the taxpayers of Suffolk County. I thank you.

(Applause)

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Debra. Carol DeMangin.

MS. DEMANGIN:

My name is Carol DeMangin. I live in Ridge and my mother is a resident at the Nursing Home. And I can't tell you that I know where to begin to tell you how angry and upset I am with this whole issue.

When I read in the paper and the little bit of Mr. Levy's budget about his presentation, his proposal

for his budget, that recreation fees haven't gone up in seven years, as if that's something to be proud of, and the same body is also calling to sell off a nursing home, my initial reaction is something is rotten in Denmark, okay? There's something wrong with that kind of thinking. I don't feel that's anything to be proud of, I think it's something to be ashamed of. I really believe that the obligation, one obligation of government, is to preserve our assets, not neglect them, not destroy them, not allow them to deteriorate because it's something you don't personally believe in or have any experience with. If that's what is going on here, then, please, do us all a favor and go home, because, eventually, all of you will move on to something else, you'll be voted out or you will decide on your own it's time to move on, and the rest of us will be left without a valuable health care facility, and I don't think anybody has the right to do that. If you have no experience with nursing homes, if you have a lot of money where you can afford private care for your family, then you really don't know what we're up against and you don't know the suffering that we go through. So while you'll be out playing golf, other people will be suffering, and if you can live with that, God help you, because I know I couldn't, and that's not why I would vote for anybody. I am so sorry I ever voted for Mr. Levy. That was an ignorant mistake on my part, one that I won't do again, and I'm going to be paying very close attention to every vote now that I cast.

Also, I come here in good faith to a hearing, and now, from what I hear, that there's going to be more hearings, that these sessions probably shouldn't even be held. So I have to say, what on earth is going on? There are people out there who I know would have come, but it's two days before a holiday, it's 4 o'clock in the afternoon, they're working, they're shopping, they're preparing for Thanksgiving. Why are we even here if we have to do this all over again? There's something really wrong here, really wrong.

And we're counting on you, we're counting on you to do what is right. It's not about money, it's about lives. Money comes and goes, fortunes come and go, economies change all the time, but you have to do what is right. If you let this facility go, we will be down a valuable asset that you could turn around to make into a showpiece. And I think all areas of potential revenue have to be explored, whether it's bringing in veterans, whether it's raising recreation rates, or anything else that you know of. No matter how small, you need to look at every one of them, because, collectively, there could be a fair amount of money coming in that would help this facility. We're counting on you. Thank you.

(Applause)

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Carol. Peter Quinn.

MR. QUINN:

Good afternoon, Members of the Legislature.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Good afternoon, Peter.

MR. QUINN:

Pardon me?

P.O. LINDSAY:

Good afternoon.

MR. QUINN:

Good afternoon. And I'm here as a matter of policy, distinctions between the two parties, I'm here as a matter of philosophy, and I'm here as a matter of principle.

I grew up -- I grew up in the Depression. I remember when my father worked three days a week, and my mother would answer the door to invite some individual into the house to have lunch with

us, and the person would be asked to sweep the sidewalk, pick up the coal in front of the chute that didn't get inside the house, shovel the snow, or simply sit down and eat lunch with us, because all of those people who came to our door were unemployed. And I don't want to see that kind of cutthroat decision being made to eliminate the workers at this health facility.

And I must tell you, I think it's class warfare. For years we've been listening to the think tanks, the conservative think tanks who'd want to tell us that we don't need to have unionized workers, we can do it better in the private sector; let's cut government down to size and eliminate those unions and eliminate people who get a -- eliminate their pensions, and eliminate their healthcare benefits, and cut their wages. Well, we're now in a similar predicament these days.

I said months ago that I thought we were going to be in a depression, but we're going to see, still see colossal cuts. And when it impacts New York State directly, then it impacts all the counties and towns, because you're seeking some money from the State, and when you can't get it, you've got to impose cuts. So it's depressing to think that the County Executive, in one fell swoop, is going to close a facility that's been operating for 100 years and wipe out the union workers there to engage some private sector company that's allegedly going to do it better. I think that's absurd.

And I would urge -- and I applaud, by the way, the full Legislature for having stood up to Steve Levy and challenged him. As the woman before me said, there are other cuts that can be made. I'm sure you've scrutinized the budget in detail. I'm sure that, given the nature of the huge layoffs that still haven't come yet, that are going to impact our full society, we have to push for the next 50-some days and hope that President-Elect Obama has some meaningful plan that will provide subsidies for the working class, of which I was long a member and still support union's efforts. Thank you. They are part of that middle class.

(Applause)

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Peter. Christopher Ogno. Hi, Chris?

MR. OGNO:

Yeah, I'm Chris.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Good to see you again.

MR. OGNO:

Chris Ogno. I work at John J. Foley, and I guess my intentions for standing up here today is not to tell you what a great place it is, or not to tell you how to save money there. It would be like preaching to the choir. I want to thank each and every one of you, minus one, that you guys have stood behind us and we really, really need your help. Mr. Levy could say that it's because of our economic downturn and the economic crisis as to why we have to sell the facility, but I just don't think that's true; he's been trying for awhile now. It's a real shame that he has this political agenda when people's lives are on the line. I just can't fathom what kind of morals he has. It's a real shame.

We need each and every one of you guys. We need help to -- I really personally think that John J. Foley will never make money. It's not a moneymaker, it's a valuable service. And where do you draw the line? Where do you draw the line between making money and providing a valuable service? Can anybody here do that? I stand here, and mostly my coworkers are here. How are these public hearings publicized? I don't see no public here. As a matter of fact, I don't -- I haven't heard one person speak out against the sale -- for the sale, excuse me. What does that mean? Can we possibly go through these public hearings and Mr. Levy will eventually get what he wants? Nobody will come here and say, "Yeah, it's a good idea to sell the facility," but it will happen anyway? I'm really starting to lose faith in the system. What is it going to take? Let's not draw

that line. We take care of people.

In 1974, County Executive Klein wanted to get rid of us. What does that say? That sets an image that when times are great, Suffolk County will take care of its people, but when times are bad, sorry, you're going to get shifted aside. We implore the Legislators. You guys have done a fantastic job so far. Keep standing up to Mr. Levy, he's wrong. Thank you.

(Applause)

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Chris. Linda Ogno. Hello, Linda.

MRS. OGNO:

Good afternoon.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Are you related to Chris?

MRS. OGNO:

No.

MR. OGNO:

No.

P.O. LINDSAY:

No. Okay, okay. Just trying to get that straight.

MRS. OGNO:

That's my son, I'm his proud mother. Thank you for hearing me. I'm a proud worker for John J. Foley for 20 years and I have a couple of things to say.

I just wish that Mr. Levy had put this much energy into trying to make our facility work that he has to close us. If he just went for the good of it --

(Applause)

-- how far he would have come and made so many people happy. I don't understand how people can work against good, but we have plenty of them that do.

This facility has been around over 100 years. We've already made it through one Depression, not that it had anything compared to now. Our fathers went through some Depression and that facility came through it. I'm pretty sure that this facility can come through this Depression. And I thank you for all your help. Thank you.

(Applause)

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Linda. Christopher DeStio. Hi.

MR. DESTIO:

Good evening, everybody. I'm Chris DeStio from the John J. Foley Nursing Home.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Hi, Chris. How are you doing?

MR. DESTIO:

How are you doing, sir?

P.O. LINDSAY:

All right.

MR. DESTIO:

All right. First of all, I wish everybody a Happy Thanksgiving, and I hope everybody is doing well.

I'd like to change things up a little bit here. I just want to go through a couple of things here. Clearly, here we must address the problems at the John J. Foley Nursing Home so we can strengthen its foundation for its future needs of Suffolk County, and totally prevent it from collapsing, and this is what we think is happening here, but not now. We need to increase efficiencies, reduce costs, improve collections of receivables at John J. Foley, identify every possible grant and other revenues at John J. Foley.

I'd like to dive right into this HMM report once again. On Page 13 of the HMM Operational Review and Facility Option Briefing, it gave five disposition options regarding the future of John J. Foley. First was facility closure, second was the sale of the facility, third was partial privatization of facility operations, fourth was complete privatization of facility operations, and the fifth was sale of the bed licenses.

And here are some of my -- here are some of the options that we came up with at John J. Foley that are not mentioned at all. Have a management team come in, increase efficiencies, hopefully soon.

Two, aggressively market the facility to get more private pays in here and max out the Adult Day Care Program, which is a rich resource of revenue to our facility.

Aggressively pursue our veterans to capitalize on our TRICARE contract, and in return, do a great service for our veterans.

Pursue all grants that are entitled to John J. Foley.

Pursue lost revenue, not by using collection agencies, but by using our County Attorneys at no cost to John J. Foley.

Number 6, implement and carry out services from our Yaphank Jail; Trustees to come over, maintain our grounds at John J. Foley to reduce our deficit a little bit more.

Number 7, expand our volunteer program. Get as many people needed to work in each department to provide volunteer services to reduce labor costs at our facility, and, at the same time, provide the needed service that our residents so deserve at John J. Foley.

Number 8, have an open house every quarter. Have the public see our facility. Invite veterans groups, civic associations, senior groups. The small cost, I wrote, cost to do this will pay for itself tenfold.

Number 9, have fundraisers on behalf of the building where the money raised can go directly to the facility to improving the health care needs of our residents. Some hospitals do it, why can't we?

Number 10, form a John J. Foley Task Force Committee, and have one person from each department meet monthly with the Director of the Nursing Home, one member from the Legislators, and one member from the County Exec's Office and stay on top of the issues of the facility. So, if an area is lacking where it's not supposed to be, we can address it immediately.

And finally, Number 11, all monies that are raised from sponsors or fundraisers can also be used for marketing, which will pay for itself indefinitely at John J. Foley.

The number of -- the number of John J. Foley's deficit keeps changing every time you see the news or you read a newspaper. We need to pin down the number -- we need to pin down that exact number to the facts. At this point, we should be on a fact-finding mission and not listen to hearsay or bloated numbers, like 12, 15, 18 million losses a year at John J. Foley. All patients at John J. Foley receive the best care possible and forcing a private entity to care for the clientele they choose not to could possibly result in inadequate care. And I also feel that our new Director made significant changes in our facility, and I also feel, as we keep moving along, he will put us in the direction we need to be.

And I'd like to get back to this sponsor stuff here on the charitable thing I brought up. Why can't we have sponsors in our facility? As an example, the highway has sponsors all over it. Why can't we have sponsors as an example to sponsor a whole unit or even a few beds at John J. Foley? If we had a group of volunteers under the guidance of our administrator, form a charitable organization to look for and seek donations and sponsors on behalf of John J. Foley. If this is possible, why can't we do this?

These are just a few of the ideas for the Legislators to ponder on. We have some very -- we have come very far since January, and I'm very proud to say that all this is possible with all the people in this room. I just don't talk the talk up here, I'm also willing to volunteer my time, if it is possible, to get these charitable ideas off the ground if it needs to be done. And I thank you for your time.

(Applause)

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Chris, for your thoughtful comments. Dot Kerrigan. Hi, Dot.

MS. KERRIGAN:

Hi. Good afternoon. I don't have anything prepared to say. I just wanted to thank you. I did go -- I just thank you all, those of you who did come, it's nice to see you all. And when we went the other night to the County Executive meeting, we were all kind of disappointed. He didn't even come. That was very upsetting. It was his meeting. We thought that perhaps we would actually have a moment to interact with him and have an exchange, but that never happened. So, again, thank you for coming, for being here and hosting us.

As a taxpayer in Suffolk County, I'm really -- you know, to look over the HMM report and then to look over the report done by the Budget Review Office, being this HMM was the third such study done, costing tens of thousands of dollars, to me, as a taxpayer, I really find it redundant. I looked over the figures myself. Some of them are just absolutely not true. I know we've been over this before, but there's been such bad press that now our facility is taking in less money. We don't have bed hold.

I took this off of the New York State Health website. 2004 -- this compares John J. Foley to other statewide -- as far as occupancy. We had 96.1% occupancy that year. The statewide was 94.2. In 2005, our occupancy was -- averaged 97.7; statewide was 93.9. '06, 96.6, and statewide, 94.3. We always are above the State occupancy rate for a really good reason, because we are a good facility. Right now, our occupancy is about 90% due to County Executive Levy and all the negative press that we've had, which is also -- as a taxpayer, I really resent this, because he's sabotaged something that we're struggling to improve, and it just goes on and on.

I just hope -- and I, also as a taxpayer, I'd like to thank the people who worked on the budget recession. I work in my church's food pantry, which is a very rewarding experience. If anybody has done it before, it's quite an experience. Last year, around this time, we had a lot more food in the pantry. Island Harvest helps us. It's a very, very fine organization. I see that the County Executive's budget cut that funding by \$50,000. That is to me a crime, with the people that come into our church and all the other facilities, just to have food to put on the table for their family, to

have that taken away from them. I know that that's probably never been the case for some people, but when you have someone come up to you who's frail and elderly and holds up a can that costs 99 cents and says, "Can I have this?" This is why we need leadership here. And "Can I have this", now every time I go to donate, I buy corned beef hash, just hoping this gentleman comes back. And that's what we need. We really appreciate not only the time you took with our facility, but the other line budgets that really needed to be addressed. For Suffolk County as a whole, thank you very much.

(Applause)

P.O. LINDSAY:

Dot, Dot, Dot. Dot, before you go away, we did restore Island Harvest.

MS. KERRIGAN:

Thank you. I'm --

P.O. LINDSAY:

The \$50,000 was put back in the budget. And the other thing that -- yeah, there's been some bumps in the road, as far as occupancy at John J. Foley, the last -- the last year-and-a-half. Just before this meeting, I met with the Interim Director there and he tells me we're back up to 90% again, because it was lower than that when he first took over.

MS. KERRIGAN:

Yes.

P.O. LINDSAY:

And he is confident that we'll get to that 95 within the next couple of months and I --

MS. KERRIGAN:

I think he's doing a great job.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I wished him well, and he seems very motivated. So I hope we get back to that 95, because it's an important number.

MS. KERRIGAN:

Thank you.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Dot.

MS. KERRIGAN:

Have a good -- Happy Thanksgiving.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you. Kathleen Reeves.

MS. REEVES:

Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Kathleen Reeves. We've -- I've been here before, and I'm a nurse at John J. Foley. And there's just a few things I want to bring up in reference to the HHM (sic) report. According to the HHM (sic) report, the staff should be cut by 50. We've already -- we're already down a hundred people to what we were a couple of years -- two years ago.

Also, Mr. Levy makes it sound as though close John J. Foley, sell John J. Foley, it's going to solve all the problems of Suffolk County because the benefits and things like that. Well, are our benefits any different than DPW, or the electrical engineers, or the Parks Department? We have the same

benefits they do. Is he -- is his goal to eventually close them, too?

Also, with privatization of the facility, he's guaranteed that the residents will be able to keep their beds, and he really can't guarantee that. He can only guarantee that at the time of sale, if he sells it, if it's sold, because facilities have ways of getting rid of residents they don't want. And I really can't see Mr. Levy turning around and saying, "You're not living up to your part of the bargain, I'm taking it back." They send them out to the hospitals and they don't let them come back. This is what nursing homes do all over the country, they do it all over the Island. We also have many residents with MS, we have residents who are quads in electric wheelchairs that most nursing facilities cannot accommodate. They can't -- the halls are too narrow, doors are too narrow, and the rooms are too small. Taking away these residents' electric wheelchairs would put them -- make them bedbound. And I'm -- some of them are in their twenties, early thirties. We have quads from motor vehicle accidents, diving accidents.

Also, one of the things that Chris brought up is like the -- with the deficit. The deficit has been roughly 5 million dollars, which comes out to roughly 125. -- 1.5 million a year. The County Attorney's Office was approached about collecting this, and, evidently, they always had some other kind of priority, so this is why the facility went to an outside collection agency. All right?

Also, just one more fact I want to bring up, is this is 2008. In 2010, the baby-boomers are going to start hitting, because the baby-boomers are from 1945 to 1964, and these -- a lot of these people, as they get older, they're going to need a place to go, and Long Island is going to be desperately short of nursing home beds. There's just too many, and we have a lot of them on the Island, and, yeah, some will go to Florida and what have you, but, for the most part, a lot of them will stay here and they're going to need a place to go, and the facilities that are on the Island are just enough. There's no reason to close John J. Foley. Mr. Fein is doing a great job. He's turning the facility around. The income has increased tremendously since he came. And I think we're going in a positive direction, but we need time to get there, because the debt did not happen overnight and it's not going to go away overnight, it's going to take some time, and I hope the Legislature allows us to have that time. Thank you. And I hope you all have a great Thanksgiving.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Kathleen. Christine Harvey.

MS. HARVEY:

Good afternoon. My name is Chris Harvey and I work at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Lake Ronkonkoma, and I'm here today to speak on a -- on behalf of the three hundred people who signed letters a couple of weeks ago in our parish, and also a couple of our neighboring parishes, regarding the John J. Foley Nursing Facility. I asked my Pastor if we could -- our Peace and Justice Committee could have permission to present these letters to the parishioners and he gave the permission, and we collected letters on just one day after religious services, and we met no resistance whatsoever. We had more people coming to sign up than normally would ever get involved in anything that has to do with the, you know, public sector. But I'm also here to speak on a personal note.

For a number of years I worked with a youth group in my parish and we brought children from our parish to John J. Foley on Saturday mornings to the Adult Day Care section of the facility, and we sang, and danced, and did crafts with the people there. The children, who are now college students, were so impressed by the facility and what they offer there. And I was speaking to a couple of them who are away at college right now and they were so very disappointed to hear that such a facility might be closed. They felt that it was a place that was very lively, very happy, and a facility unlike some other nursing facilities that they had been in. They found it, you know, extremely well run, and very clean, and very uplifting, rather than, you know, kind of pessimistic, which most teenagers would find a nursing facility.

The other -- the other part of what I wanted to say is that, as a Parish Outreach Coordinator, I deal

with a lot of people who are on the fringes, people who are poor, people who are frail, people who are elderly. And I know that one of my volunteers, who's in her 80's, a couple of years ago gave three days a week of her time at the facility because her son, who is an adult, had to be in a nursing home, and that's where he lived for a couple of years until his death. She was very saddened to hear the news about the facility. And so I'm really here to speak on behalf of these people.

I don't know a whole lot about the politics of, you know, how the facility can remain open, but I do -- I've been in the veterans facility, a number of private nursing homes. I take a lot of children out to volunteer and adults to volunteer, and I really can't understand how the County Executive could possibly think about closing such a facility that really is there to take care of the poor, the elderly, the frail, the people who wouldn't be able to afford other places to go. Thank you.

(Applause)

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Christine. I appreciate you coming down and sharing those thoughts with us. I don't have anymore cards. Is there anyone else in the audience that would like to speak? No? I don't see anybody.

Since this whole discussion has started about the Nursing Home and what to do with the Nursing Home, I know my office has received a lot of letters and petitions, and I've gotten phone calls, and I think probably my colleagues have as well. I got a call the other night, though, that I think should be put on the record, because I think it's kind of important. And I know he wouldn't mind sharing his name, Mike Conroy, which a lot of you know with the Carpenters Union, and I thought he was calling me about some labor issue, a bill we had, and it wasn't, it was about Foley, because his mom lived the last days of her life there for a number of years. And he just wanted me to know that he thought, legislatively, as a body, we were doing the right thing, because he said the facility was just wonderful to his mother in her final days and took real good care of her, and he thought it should absolutely be protected. And I thought that was a real nice phone call.

With that, I -- unless any of the other Legislators want to say anything, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

D.P.O. VILORIA-FISHER:

Second.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So moved. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? We stand adjourned. Thank you for coming. Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

[THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:46 P.M.]